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Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A crossflow ceramic membrane filtering unit comprising:

a housing;

5 one or more filtering elements partly coated with a filtering membrane on a filtering portion and having an impermeable surface in a sealing region;

10 joints between the filtering elements impermeable surfaces and between the filtering elements impermeable surfaces and the housing being sealed by means of ~~a gasket~~ or a gasket system, the gasket system defining an inner seal and an outer seal with which defines an internal intermediate space defined between the inner and outer seals; and

15 a means connected with the internal intermediate space to indicate a leak through one of the seals of the gasket system.

2. (Original) The ceramic membrane filtering unit according to claim 1, wherein the intermediate space is connected to the outside of the filtering unit.

3. (Currently Amended) The ceramic membrane filtering unit according to claim 1 ~~further including wherein the means includes:~~

5 a sensor for indicating fluid leaking into the intermediate spaces.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A crossflow~~ The ceramic membrane filtering unit ~~according to claim 1 wherein the filtering elements include comprising:~~

a housing;

5 one or more plate-shaped filtering elements having permeate discharge apertures, said elements being jointed together and to the housing, said permeate discharge apertures ~~thereby forming a tight, unitary being formed through impermeable central zones of the elements to define a conduit~~
10 for permeate removal, and the outer surface of the elements

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being coated with a filtering membrane and being essentially free to receive material to be filtered[[,]];

the plate-shaped elements being fitted to each other and to the housing by means of at least two gaskets, and the impermeable central zones of the elements being impermeable so as to forming intermediate spaces delimited by the gaskets and the impermeable surfaces, and said intermediate spaces being interconnected by leakage fluid apertures in the elements, said leakage fluid apertures having impermeable surfaces.

5. (Currently Amended) A crossflow ~~the~~ ceramic membrane filtering unit according to ~~claim 1~~ wherein the filtering elements include comprising:

a housing;

5 at least one tubular filtering element having at least one channel internally coated with a filtering membrane and at least one impermeable surface surrounding the channel;

a joint between the filtering element and the housing being sealed by means of a gasket system, the gasket system including a pair of annular sealing surfaces which define an internal intermediate space, the pair of sealing surfaces defining a redundant seal between the housing and impermeable surface of the filtering unit;

10 at least one exit channel connected with the internal intermediate space to discharge any fluid that bypasses one of the sealing surfaces.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for sealing a ceramic crossflow membrane filtering unit which includes comprising one or more filtering elements within a housing, said elements being partly coated with a filtering membrane and

5 having an impermeable sealing surface portion, the method comprising:

sealing joints between at least one of the impermeable sealing surface portions of the filtering elements and between the impermeable sealing surface portions of the

10 filtering elements and the housing by a gasket or a gasket system comprising an internal space connected to the outside

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which includes a pair of seals with an intermediate space defined therebetween;

15 monitoring for a liquid in the intermediate space to identify leakage in the gasket system.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 6 further including:

filtering water through the filtering elements.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7 further including ultrafiltering the water.

9. (Currently Amended) A crossflow membrane filtering unit comprising:

5 at least one filter element having a feed surface over which a feed liquid flows and a discharge surface from which a permeate flow is discharged;

a seal assembly disposed between the filter element and one of: (1) another filter element and, (2) a housing, the seal assembly including:

10 ~~an inner~~ a first seal portion in fluid communication with the feed liquid flow,

~~an outer~~ a second seal portion in fluid communication with the permeate flow, and

15 ~~a channel~~ an intermediate space between the inner first and outer ~~seals~~ second seal portions, the ~~channel~~ intermediate space being in communication with a leakage discharge channel such that liquid discharged through the discharge channel is indicative of leakage through at least one of the inner first and outer ~~seals~~ second seal portions.

10. (Currently Amended) The crossflow membrane filtering unit according to claim 9 wherein the at least one filter element includes:

5 a plurality of filter plates, each plate having an aperture defined ~~by~~ adjacent the discharge surface, an impermeable surface surrounding the aperture, ~~and~~ the feed

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surface surrounding the impermeable surface, the plates being stacked with the ~~apertures in alignment and pairs of the first and second seal assembly portions disposed in a sealing~~ relationship between the impermeable surfaces of adjacent plates with one of the intermediate spaces being defined between each of the pairs first and second seal portions, the apertures defining a passage between intermediate spaces.

11. (Currently Amended) The crossflow membrane filtering unit according to claim 10 wherein the ~~inner first and outer seals second seal portions~~ each include an annular gasket, the inner and outer gaskets being spaced to define the channel mounted concentrically between the impermeable surfaces of two adjacent filter elements such that an annular region between the gaskets defines the intermediate space.

12. (Currently Amended) The crossflow membrane filtering unit according to claim 9 wherein the filter element includes:
an interior bore extending between end surfaces, the interior bore being surrounded by the ~~inflow feed~~ surface;
the end surfaces being impermeable, the seal assembly being disposed between at least one end surface and a housing in which the filtering element is received.

13. (Previously Presented) The crossflow membrane filtering unit according to claim 9 wherein the filter element includes:
an interior bore defined by the inflow surface;
a peripheral surface having an impermeable ring at least at one end and the permeate surface defined thereadjacent;
the seal assembly between being disposed between the impermeable ring and a housing in which the filter element is received.

14. (Currently Amended) The crossflow membrane filtering unit according to claim 9 further including:

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5 a sensor disposed in communication with the ~~channel~~
intermediate space for sensing a presence of liquid in the
~~channel~~ intermediate space.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of ceramic
membrane filtering comprising:

5 flowing a feed liquid over a feed surface of a filter
element and discharging a permeate liquid from a discharge
surface of the filter element, the feed liquid and the permeate
liquid being separated from each other by a seal assembly
disposed between the filter element and at least one of another
filter element and a housing in which the filter element is
received, the seal assembly having a first seal ~~in communication~~
10 ~~with for sealing~~ the feed liquid from an intermediate space and
a second seal ~~in communication with for sealing~~ the permeate
liquid and ~~a channel therebetween from the intermediate space,~~
the intermediate space being defined between the first and
second seals;

15 monitoring the ~~channel~~ intermediate space for the
presence of liquid.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to
claim 15 further including:

5 in response to detecting liquid in the ~~channel~~
intermediate space, determining whether the liquid is the feed
liquid or the permeate liquid.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to
claim 15 wherein the feed liquid is heat sterilized water.